

as well as the emergent research and policy agendas. It is not until here that Editors explicitly state that “...As academics, [they] are particular focused on the potential for researchers to help reduce health inequalities, but [they] also recognize that research is only one part of this effort” [p.297], which accurately summarizes the spirit of the book.

Collectively, the book covers challenging issues related to research, policy and action on health inequalities, and attempts to bring together different research and policy perspectives. It is necessary to highlight, that several fundamentally important topics are emphasized throughout the book, that are not often discussed in mainstream literature regarding health inequalities. However, some other important topics such as the elements of power, history and politics, and complexity are only touched upon within certain chapters, and could warrant independent chapters in their own right, and even a few topics are not included (e.g. unemployment issues are discussed, however there is no acknowledgement of precarious employment, and globalization and environmental changes are mentioned although the ecological crisis is not).

Despite some limitations, this book certainly contains essential concepts for anyone interested in this field, especially in the UK context, and is a welcome addition to the current collection of books published on health inequalities. Future books should consider building on this multidisciplinary integrated approach, to potentially expand on some of the issues mentioned here, and establish an even more balanced perspective from those working on health inequalities, both locally and globally.

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There has been a substantial growth of interest in qualitative longitudinal scholarship in recent years, thanks in large part to the success of Timescapes, an integrated programme of research carried out by a network of researchers from five universities in the United Kingdom, working within different disciplinary traditions across the social sciences. This edited volume aims to provide a comprehensive demonstration of the value of this integrated QL approach for understanding changing family relationships across biographical, generational and historical time. There is a particular focus on the impact of social policies on family lives over time, and the volume aspires to draw out lessons for social policy from QL research.

The editors' introductory chapter introduces the Timescapes project, which included nine studies, seven of which involved the collection of new empirical data, while two centred on archiving and secondary analysis. The seven original empirical studies all incorporated a prospective longitudinal design that involved re-interviewing participants over time. Two of

the studies also collected retrospective, life history data from some participants. Collectively, the projects followed the lives of more than 300 people across the United Kingdom. This edited volume includes chapters based on each of the nine studies, organized in three sections according to broad stages of the family life course: childhood and early adulthood, parenting, and older lives. The aims and scope of the volume are thus on a grand scale. Nevertheless, as the editors state in their conclusion, the book does succeed in bringing the findings of the project to life through the experiences of the participants as they are revealed across each of the nine substantive chapters.

In their introduction, the editors describe QL research as ‘the desire to explore what social change through the passage of time means to those who experience it, and how people understand processes of change in their own lives in the context of broader social shifts’ (p. 1). From a social policy perspective, the key question is how such research on ‘the biographical processes of lived experience’ can contribute to the development of *better* policy? The Timescapes project has considerable relevance from a policy perspective, insofar as the studies traversed both the shift from a New Labour to a Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government in 2010 and the introduction of austerity measures in the wake of the 2008 global crisis.

Taken as a whole, the volume draws out two themes relating to contemporary policy discourses and practices, based on the authors’ analyses of how those discourses and practices are experienced within the ‘small worlds’ of participants’ immediate and extended family lives: (1) a critique of narrow, cross-sectional understandings of inter-generational relationships within policies and practices oriented towards addressing the challenges of ageing societies and towards supporting vulnerable families; (2) a critique of the narratives of ‘choice’ and ‘preference’ accompanying policies aimed at promoting participation in the labour force and ‘responsible’ parenting. One of the principal messages of the book is that policy processes and professional practices fail to take account of the complex temporal rhythms of ‘real lives.’

The theme of inter-generational relationships is fore-grounded within the first and third sections of the volume, focusing on participants in younger and older family life stages, although it also appears in the middle section that focuses on parenting. These chapters highlight the extent to which people’s lives are embedded within multi-generational practices and flows that do not conform to the concerns with ‘inter-generational justice’ found in many popular and policy narratives, but which nevertheless do give rise to distinctive conflicts and challenges at different life course stages, sometimes in response to policy interventions that are not sensitive to their contours. The extent to which generations are layered differently across cohorts in different age and class contexts is revealed in particularly interesting ways. The chapters that focus on parenting and ‘work-family conflict’ all draw out the contradictions inherent in policies that aim to promote both ‘responsible citizenship’ through participation in the labour market and parental responsibility for raising ‘citizen workers of the future’ (described in Chapter 7). The QL analyses show how narratives centred on individual ‘choice’ or ‘preferences’ fail to capture the gendered temporal and social contexts within which people work out the challenges of work and family life.

This volume is extremely rich and complex, conceptually, methodologically, in the range of topics covered and in the variety of generational perspectives brought to bear on each of the themes. It includes some discussion of the ethical and practical challenges associated with working with participants over time and with the development of the Timescapes archive. One chapter, based on the Secondary Analysis Project, demonstrates the potential for developing new insights by working across different datasets to address questions about shared themes. As the editors state in the Conclusion, QL research is exceptional in its capacity to provide a deep understanding of the effects of policies and policy changes on individuals, families

and generations through time. The challenge for the future will be how to translate that understanding into more effective policies that are sensitive to the complex dynamics revealed in this volume.

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Emily Cuming (2016), *Housing, Class and Gender in Modern British Writing, 1880–1912*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, £64.99, pp. 244, hbk.

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Emily Cuming brings a splash of colour to UK housing narratives. She explores domestic interiors and housing environments through fictional and non-fictional representations covering, in four chapters: slums; boarding houses; mid twentieth century working class childhood homes and council house estates. Her aim is to undermine ‘tenets which privilege forms of bourgeois interiority’ and the idea that ‘the individual’s real sense is to be found “at home”’ (p. 2).

In chapter one, ‘Slums: Reading and writing the dwellings of the urban poor’, Cuming cites Charles Booth as declaring ‘everywhere the same conditions repeat themselves and George Sim’s statement ‘the story of one slum is the story of another’. She then illustrates the negative portrayal of the slum interior in ‘top down’ literature using vignettes such as Engels’ shock in discovering that many Manchester slums contained ‘absolutely nothing’, Sims’ depiction of walking across the floorboards in a slum as producing the ‘slushing noise of a plank spread across a mud puddle’ and Charles Booth’s declaration on the slums as ‘dirt, drink and swearing prevailing with all’. Such reports are contrasted with accounts from slum dwellers such as Pat O’Mara’s *The Autobiography of a Liverpool Irish Slummy* where the ‘shadowy, degenerate figures of earlier slum narratives are replaced by an individualised cast featuring the idiosyncratic faces and voices of families living at extremely close quarters’ (p 66). Surprisingly, Robert Roberts’ (1990) *The Classic Slum: Salford Life in the First Quarter of the Century* — the most valuable antidote to the association between poor housing conditions and low character — is not included.

Accounts of boarding and lodging houses have been neglected in UK housing accounts. In chapter two, ‘Boarding and lodging houses: At home with strangers’, Cuming explores their significance as a spatial ‘other’ to the middle-class bourgeois home, sometimes leading such places ‘to be cast as inauthentic and even possibly illicit places’ (p 73). The distinction between a boarding house and a lodging house is opaque and Cuming, with the exception of a section on ‘Windrush: Culture of lodging in black writing’, focuses on the genteel boarding house. This reveals interesting dimensions to ‘living with strangers’; boarding house proprietors resisted liaisons because they might end in marriages that were bad for business. However, the ‘down and dirty’ common lodging house is a better exemplar of ‘othering’ via ‘tenets which privilege forms of bourgeois identity’. Universally condemned as ‘dens of iniquity’, one London common lodging house was home to 9 clerks, 5 ‘broken down’ gentlemen, 3 engineers, 3 insurance agents, 2 school masters, an actor, a doctor, a solicitor and a farmer who might occupy the same cubicle for several years (City of London, 2016).

Chapter three, ‘Unholy homes: Life writing of the postwar ‘scholarship’ generation’, although an interesting account of how scholarship boys and girls interpreted home, does little to illuminate the main theme of the book but chapter four, ‘Estates: Social Housing in twentieth